

Higher education no longer just a dream for RMG workers

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

After passing HSC examination in 2006, Firoza Khatun wanted to receive higher education at a university, but she could not afford it. She thought her dreams were shattered, as she had to start working in a readymade garment factory to support her family.

But Firoza's story did not end there, as she got to apply for a full scholarship at Asian University for Women in Chattogram.

"When an official from human resource department of my factory informed me that AUW offers RMG workers an opportunity to apply for admission with full scholarship, my happiness knew no bound," she told The Daily Star.

"Some of my colleagues and I sat for admission test in 2016 and finally I was selected from my factory, Youngone Group in Chattogram Export Processing Zone," said Firoza, who hails from Chapainawabganj.

Firoza is getting an Honour's degree in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics at AUW.

Like Firoza, a number of RMG workers are now continuing their higher education in AUW with full scholarship.

The stories of Marufa Khatun and Popi Rani Roy mirror Firoza's. Marufa was working as an operator at a Mohammadi Group factory in Gazipur when she got the opportunity to enrol at AUW in 2018.

"My education was stopped after HSC in 2016 when my father died and I got married," said Marufa from Gaibandha. "I had to start working to support my family."

"I never imagined that I would get to study at an international-standard university," she said.

Popi Rani Roy, from Panchagarh, was a worker at Giant Group in Gazipur before she got admission to AUW in 2018.

"I couldn't continue studying after my HSC exam in 2017, as my father had fallen ill. So I joined the RMG industry," she said, adding, "I feel lucky to have a chance at quality education now."

AUW had a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with 14 RMG factories under which the factory authorities pay the basic salary of



Marufa, left, and Popi pose for a picture at AUW campus. They are among 60 girls working at readymade garments factories and also simultaneously studying at the university.

the selected workers for five years so that their families do not face hardship.

Founded in the port city in 2008, AUW initiated the programme in 2016, said Rehana Khan, director of admissions, adding, "Mohammadi Group was the first one to sign an MoU."

"We started with 11 students from the RMG industry in 2016 and now we have 60 students from 14 companies," she said, adding, "The students who came from RMG sector are more confident as they study in a multicultural environment here."

Contacted, Rubana Huq, managing director of Mohammadi Group, said she joined the initiative as she felt that women who worked in her factory have a right to fulfil their dream of higher education.

"If I can cherish my dream to earn a doctorate

degree, why should my workers be deprived of higher education?" she said, adding, "So I decided to get on board with this initiative."

"Now many other factories have come forward," said Rubana, also president of Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), adding, "The first batch of RMG workers will graduate next year."

Kamal Ahmad, founder of AUW, said, "We believe talents are hidden everywhere, including the RMG sector," adding, "This is a glaring example of how businesses can contribute to the society, as many of them have signed agreements with us."

The admission tests take place on Fridays, he said. A total of 4,000 women have taken the admission test since 2016, among whom 60 have been selected so far.

Cox's Bazar Road Accident Students go on rampage after fellow dies

STAR REPORT

Three persons were killed in separate road accidents in Cox's Bazar, Manikganj and Rajbari yesterday and Monday.

In Cox's Bazar, a youth, who passed Dakshil Examination from Eidgaon Shah Jabbaria Dakshil Madrasa this year, was killed and three school students were injured, when a motorcycle they were riding collided head-on with a bus yesterday, said police and witnesses.

Students and locals set fire to the bus of Hanif Paribahan after the accident at Collage Gate in Eidgaon area around 10am.

Asif Kamal Imran, 17, son of Abu Taher from Eidgaon area in the district, was declared dead at a nearby clinic.

The injured -- Shamim, Joyal, and Rahul, all 18-year-olds -- are students of Eidgaon Adarsha Shikha Niketan school.

Shamim and Rahul were shifted to different hospitals in critical condition. Joyal left the clinic after primary treatment.

When other students of the school came to know of the incident, they went on a rampage. They burned rubber tyres



A bus was torched in Cox's Bazar.

on Cox's Bazar-Chattogram highway in protest, resulting in a long tailback on the road.

A police team rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control in an hour, said Md Asaduzzaman, in-charge of Eidgaon police investigation centre. Police seized the gutted bus.

In Manikganj, a construction worker

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Trial of blogger Ananta Bijoy murder begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Sylhet court yesterday started trial proceedings of blogger Ananta Bijoy Das murder case by recording testimony of the case's complainant.

Sylhet Additional Metropolitan Session Judge Muminun Nessa recorded testimony of Ananta's brother Rateswar Das, said Masuk Ahmed, additional public prosecutor. He said only one accused, Abul Khayer Rashid Ahmed, was present.

Among the five accused, Shafiqur Rahman Farabi is in Kashimpur jail while Abul Hossain, Harunur Rashid and Faisal Ahmed are absconding.

The court set June 9 for the next hearing. There are 29 witnesses in the case, the APP said.

Ananta was killed at the city's Subidbazar by unidentified assailants on the morning of May 12, 2015, while on

his way to work. Militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team later claimed responsibility for the murder online.

Crime Investigation Department (CID) of police arrested Mannan Yahya alias Mannan Rahi and his brother Abul Khayer on August 28 that year. Mannan later confessed that five people took part in the murder.

On May 9, 2017, CID pressed a revised charge sheet against six persons. Mannan died in Kashimpur jail on November 2, 2017 due to illness.

Ananta, an advocate for secularism and science, became the third victim in a spate of attacks against free-thinkers by militant groups in 2015, following science writer Avijit Roy and Oyasiqr Rahman.

Ananta's brother Rateswar Das filed a murder case accusing some unnamed persons with Sylhet Airport Police Station. Later, the case was transferred to CID.

HELPING CHILDREN THIS RAMADAN Unicef joins hands with Le Méridien

CITY DESK

Le Méridien Dhaka and Unicef Bangladesh signed an agreement on Sunday to raise money for children in Bangladesh during Ramadan from May 5 to June 4, said a press release.

The luxury hotel will support Unicef Bangladesh by contributing \$1 for each customer who purchases sehri and iftar buffets through the campaign, titled "Putting Every Child First This Ramadan". The campaign will also enable guests to make donations in boxes inside the hotel



Guests at the launch of the campaign.

throughout Ramadan.

The money will be used to strengthen Unicef's work on core issues, including reduction of preventable newborn deaths and lowering of child and mother mortalities. The cash will also help provide better nutrition for children and go toward efforts to reduce levels of stunting.

The fund will also be used to improve the quality of education for children, and ensure access to safe drinking water for them and their families. Further, the money will help end all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse of children while simultaneously strengthening opportunities for adolescents.

It is hoped that the partnership will encourage other private sector partners and individual donors to participate in resource mobilisation efforts for Unicef's programmes.



Ex-MP Taleb Ali no more

BSS, Dhaka

Veteran politician ABM Taleb Ali, who was elected parliamentarian in the 1970 East Pakistan Provincial Assembly and twice in the Bangladesh parliament in 1973 and 1979, passed away at his Feni residence yesterday morning. He was 93.

Taleb Ali, a Liberation War organiser and former labour affairs secretary of the AL, left behind two sons, three daughters and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

His body was taken to village home in Krishtopur of Sonagazi upazila after a namaz-e-janaza at Feni's Mizan Maidan yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, now in London, expressed deep sorrow at the death of Taleb Ali. In a condolence message, the PM said the nation has lost an efficient organiser and dedicated politician.

Food prices on the rise in Sylhet

Several teams to monitor markets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Prices of foods, including meat, vegetables, fruits and grains, have hiked in Sylhet city as the month of Ramadan begins.

To monitor the price hike, Sylhet District Administration formed five committees, Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection (DNCRP) formed two teams and Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industry formed one committee.

While visiting different markets at Bandarbar, Amberkhana, Rikabibazar and Shibganj, this correspondent found the prices of necessities have hiked over the last couple of days.

Of all the products, price of green chillies and bananas were seen to have increased sharply. Green chillies are now being sold at Tk 130-150 per kg, in stark contrast to the price of around Tk 40-50 only a few days ago.

Bananas are being sold at Tk 90-100 per dozen, while they were Tk 35-50 last week. Price of fish also doubled in the beginning of Ramadan.

Beef is being sold at Tk 550-650 per kg, mutton at Tk 700-750 and broiler chicken at Tk 150.

However, with a minimal hike, onion is being sold at around Tk 25 per kg, garlic at Tk 110-120, ginger at Tk 120, chickpea at Tk 75, cucumber at Tk 40-50 and eggs at around Tk 34.

Mohammad Foyez Ullah, assistant director of DNCRP in Sylhet, said, "We have formed two teams to monitor the market during Ramadan and will conduct our drives throughout the month."

Swandip Kumar Singha, additional deputy commissioner (general) in Sylhet, said, "The district administration formed five committees headed by four additional deputy commissioners and the deputy director of local government. These teams will conduct special drives in the city and suburban areas."

"Moreover, executive magistrates of the district administration are continuing their drives in the city and other areas," Swandip Kumar Singha said.

The price hike of necessities during Ramadan will be controlled, he assured.



Apollo Hospitals Dhaka organised "Patient Forum" marking World Asthma Day. The session was presided over by Dr SM Abdullah Al Mamun, senior consultant and coordinator of respiratory medicine. Dr Chandra Prakash Dkwal, senior consultant of respiratory medicine; Aftab Mahmud Khurshid, general manager of marketing and business development at Apollo Hospitals Dhaka were, among others, present at the programme where around 100 patients participated.



People seek shade from the scorching sun to enjoy some midday leisure under a canopy at Ramna Park in the capital. With the mercury consistently hitting the high 30 degrees in the city, relief from the heat has been scarce for many. The photo was taken recently.

12 tonnes of expired dates seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Rapid Action Battalion and Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection (DNCRP) seized a huge stockpile of expired imported dates in Sylhet yesterday afternoon.

In a joint drive at the fruit market near Muktijoddha Chattar of Dakshin Surma in Sylhet city, they seized dates weighing over 12 tonnes.

A mobile court also fined three traders Tk 1.40 lakh.

Rab-9 ASP Satyazit Kumar Ghosh and DNCRP Sylhet's Assistant Director Jahangir Alam led the drive.

ASP Satyazit said, "On information, the joint drive was conducted. Such drive will be continued throughout the month of Ramadan."

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আপনি জনাব মোহাম্মদ তসলিম আরিফ (১৮০০৫৮০৪), যুগ্ম-পরিচালক (সাময়িক বরখাস্তকৃত) সোস্যাল ইসলামী ব্যাংক লিঃ, বনশ্রী শাখা হতে আপনার স্ত্রী জনাব খালেদা পাটোয়ারীর প্রতিষ্ঠান "মেসার্স বিক্রমা ট্রেডার্স"-এর নামে গৃহীত ৪.০০ (চার লক্ষ) টাকা এসএমই ঋণের জামিনদার হন। ঋণের কিস্তি বকেয়া পড়ায় আউটস্ট্যান্ডিং দাঁড়ায় মোট ৩,০৩,৯৯৬.০৪/-। সোস্যাল ইসলামী ব্যাংক আপনার সাথে ৬৭ বার টেলিফোনিক আলোচনা ও ১৯ বার প্রদান করলেও আপনি ঋণ পরিশোধের বিষয়ে কোন কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করেননি। আপনার ব্যক্তিগত নথি পর্যালোচনাতে এ বিষয়ে ব্যাংক থেকে পূর্বানুমোদন গ্রহণ করার কোন দলিলাদি পরিলক্ষিত হয়নি। ব্যাংকের পূর্বানুমোদন ব্যতিরেকে আপনি আপনার স্ত্রীর প্রতিষ্ঠানের নামে গৃহীত ঋণের জামিনদার হয়ে Bangladesh Bank Staff Regulations, 2003 এর 31(3) ধারা লঙ্ঘন করেছেন। ইতোপূর্বেও অত্র ব্যাংকের অনুমোদন ব্যতিরেকে আপনি একাধিকবার বিভিন্ন ব্যাংক হতে ঋণ গ্রহণ করে ও ঋণের জামিনদার হয়ে ঋণসমূহ শ্রেণীকৃত ঋণ রূপান্তরিত হওয়ার পর অত্র অফিসের প্রশাসনিক চাপে তা পরিশোধ করেন। আপনি ব্যাংকের নিয়মকানুনের ভোগ্যাকা না করে একই ঘটনা পুনঃ পুনঃ ঘটিয়ে গুরুতর অসদাচরণ (Misconduct) করায় আপনার বিরুদ্ধে ১২-০২-২০১৮ তারিখের পত্রের মাধ্যমে অভিযোগনামা (চার্জশীট) প্রণয়ন করা হয়। আপনার বিরুদ্ধে আনীত অভিযোগ সন্দেহাতীতভাবে প্রমাণিত মর্মে তদন্ত ও ওতনানী কর্মকর্তা মতামত প্রদান করলে গভর্নর মহোদয় ১৩-০৩-২০১৯ তারিখে আপনার জন্য Bangladesh Bank Staff Regulations, 2003 এর 44(1)(g) ধারা মোতাবেক চাকুরীচ্যুতির (dismissal from service) শাস্তি নির্ধারণ করেন। এ প্রেক্ষিতে আপনার উপর কেন উপরোক্ত শাস্তি আরোপ করা হবে না সে বিষয়ে আপনার বক্তব্য প্রজ্ঞাপিত ০৭ (সাত) দিনের মধ্যে অত্র ডিপার্টমেন্টে দাখিল করার নির্দেশ দিয়ে ২০-০৩-২০১৯ তারিখে কৈফিয়ত (দ্বিতীয় শো-কাজ) মোতাবেক আপনাকে চাকুরীচ্যুত (dismissal from service) করে দেয়া হবে।

এমতাবস্থায়, এ বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের ০৭ (সাত) দিনের মধ্যে অফিসে হাজির হয়ে কারণ দর্শানো নোটিশের কৈফিয়ত-দ্বিতীয় শো-কাজ জবাব প্রদানের জন্য আপনাকে চূড়ান্ত নির্দেশ দেয়া যাচ্ছে। এ নির্দেশ পালনে ব্যর্থ হলে আপনার সাথে আর কোন প্রকার যোগাযোগ ব্যতিরেকেই Bangladesh Bank Staff Regulations, 2003 এর 44(1)(g) ধারা মোতাবেক আপনাকে চাকুরীচ্যুত (dismissal from service) করা হবে।

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হেরানির শিকার হলে কিভাবে কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON